

Abstract

A system and method is directed to electronic licensing of software using a public key infrastructure (PKI). A Licensing Authority is employed as a trusted entity to issue and manage licenses to an end-user, in a substantially similar manner as a certification authority in the PKI might issue and manage a public-key certificate. The Licensing Authority may request information including a credit card number from the end-user seeking to purchase the software. The Licensing Authority employs the provided information to authenticate the end-user and issue a digitally signed license to the end-user. The end-user employs the license to enable access to the requested software. In one embodiment, the license format is substantially similar to a public key certificate's format. The license may include a period of validity after which the license is invalid. Moreover, in one embodiment, the license may be renewed to enable continued access of the associated software.

